

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1971

Sharp Rise in Enemy Infiltration in April Is Expected by U.S.

By WILLIAM BEECHER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 30—Intelligence projections of the infiltration flow into South Vietnam, based primarily on aerial reconnaissance of the lengthy route from North Vietnam through Laos, and into Vietnam, indicate that 10,000 soldiers are expected to enter South Vietnam in April.

This would represent two to three times the rate of 3,000 men maintained over the last several months, Administration planners say. Qualified sources say that the projection of 10,000 to 15,000 men for April is based on

on reports of men strung out along the southernmost reaches of the route. It is estimated that it takes three months to make the trip by truck and on foot, under heavy pounding in hopes of increasing domestic pressure in the United States to get out as quickly as possible, regardless of South Vietnam's military capability.

Questions on Offensive

In view of the heavy flow of weapons and ammunition over the last six months—double the rate in the same period a year ago—some analysts at the Pentagon and elsewhere are questioning whether another enemy offensive is being prepared. But most senior military planners insist it is too early to tell. They say there is fragmentary evidence to suggest a

major schism within the Hanoi leadership over whether to continue the strategy of protracted war. One faction is said to favor stepping up the war in hopes of increasing domestic pressure in the United States to get out as quickly as possible, regardless of South Vietnam's military capability.

"If the higher rate of infiltration should continue for the next few months," said one high-ranking officer, "then we would look for a major new campaign."

Compounding the difficulty of prediction, the analysts generally concede, are the developments in Cambodia and Laos. For example, military men say that the closing of Cam-

bodia's ports to North Vietnamese shipping could deal a substantial blow to enemy plans in the southern half of South Vietnam.

On the Laotian situation, Administration planners say that as long as American air strikes continue along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the make-up of the Government there and the amount of territory controlled by Communist-led forces should not make much difference militarily in South Vietnam.

Pentagon and State Department sources say that North Vietnam has allowed its troop strength to fall for many months to the point where many North Vietnamese battalions are at roughly 50 per-

cent of their normal 450-man level. In a few instances two weaker units have been combined.

Supplies of rockets, mortars, small-arms ammunition and machine guns have been much higher than required by existing units, these sources say, both to compensate for recent captures of large caches and presumably to preserve the possibility of a big offensive.